

## **Example**

### **Anti-Tree Topping Opinion Editorial**

#### **Why Is Topping Harmful to Trees?**

There is a misconception about topping trees. When people want to prune back their overgrown tree, they consider tree topping as a type of pruning. This is not true. Topping can injure a tree in so many ways.

Here's what happens. When a lot of the tree canopy is removed, it is an open invitation to a slow starvation for the tree. It upsets the crown-to-root ratio and seriously affects the tree's food supply. The leaf surface is needed to produce sufficient food to feed and support the branches, trunks, and roots. Topping not only cuts off a major portion of the tree's food-making potential, but it also severely drains the tree's stored reserves.

The large wounds created by topping seldom heal completely. Exposed wood often rots causing weak, hollow limbs. Consequently, previously topped trees often have dead or dying limbs that need to be removed. Topping trees can actually cost more in the long run than proper pruning.

After topping, many epicormic shoots (suckers) come up and develop into weakly attached branches. Epicormic shoots or suckers are sprouts that emerge from dormant buds along the trunk or branch of a tree. They are also called water sprouts. They often form in response to the sudden exposure to light in a forest setting, but in the urban area they are more often associated with stress to the tree.

These suckers are not as structurally sound as are the naturally occurring branches. The suckers often consist of succulent growth which is more susceptible to diseases. These branches continually get heavier and have a high potential to fall and cause damage to people or property. From a legal standpoint, the owner of such a tree is responsible for damages if it can be proved that the owner was negligent.

The very best way to keep your trees healthy is to contact a local certified arborist. They can advise you on what you can do without topping your trees. Visit [www.treesaregood.org](http://www.treesaregood.org) to find an arborist in your area.